

Federal Lands Interim Committee

November 25, 2013

P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0054

Honorable Committee Members:

As a descendent of Idaho pioneer families, a lifelong Idaho resident and outdoorsman, and a retired natural resources professional having worked for both state and federal agencies, I have serious concerns about changing the management, control and ownership of public lands held by the federal government in the State of Idaho.

Both as an avid sportsman and as a natural resources professional, I have had ample opportunity to observe and compare the wildlife habitat conditions, the ecological balance and the relative opportunities of access for recreation on both state and federally managed lands. The federally managed lands are consistently better.

I have always been welcome to access federally owned lands and their ownership has been consistent over decades. On the other hand I have witnessed a push for state lands to be sold and traded to private interests and my access has, literally, been denied and permanently lost.

When I compare the legal mandates for state and federal lands management, I find the state's requirement to provide for maximum economic return is often counter to my interests as a sportsman and a conservationist. The federal requirements for sustainable yields, recreation opportunities and species protections better achieve long term productivity and perpetual access.

Economically, I cannot understand how Idaho agencies can afford to assume all the costs concomitant to managing the millions of acres currently under federal management. The federal land management agencies draw on funds derived from citizens throughout the United States, not just Idahoans. I can't believe the State of Idaho would even consider rejecting this income flow. Additionally, the combined federal land management agencies represent one of the largest employers in the state. It cannot be good economic policy to purposefully expel all those high quality jobs.

Overall, due to inadequate funding, I do not expect the Idaho land management agencies would be able to manage Idaho's resources at the same level of investment or professional quality as is now provided by the federal resource agencies. Without national contributions to fund land management, it appears the only avenue left would be to sell off natural resources at an unsustainable rate.

Sincerely,

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